



Let's Commission for Communities

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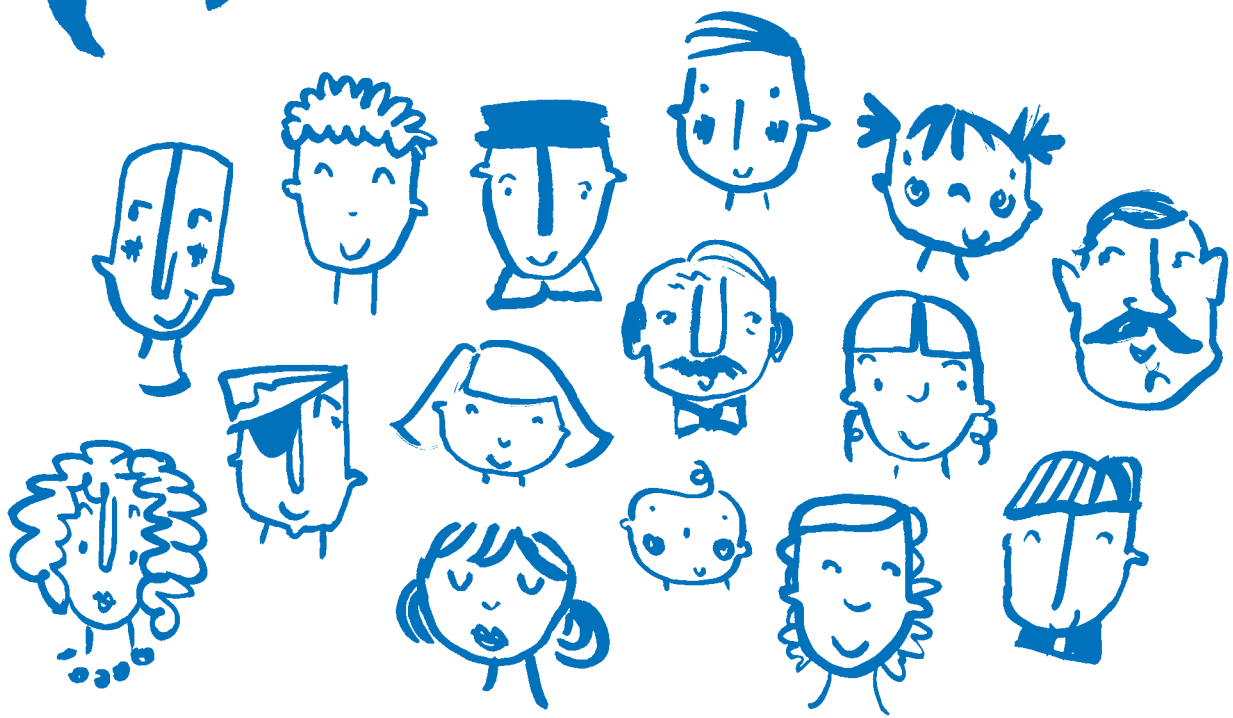
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Let's COMMISSION for COMMUNITIES



**Valuing the community and voluntary approach
to human, social and community services**

COMMISSIONING FOR COMMUNITIES

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social and community services**

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Valuing the community and voluntary approach to human, social and community services

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FOREWORD

This document sets out and affirms the contribution of the community and voluntary sector to society. It is a movement that reaches into and impacts all sectors and areas of Irish life and society, in the process promoting the common interest and improving our communities.

The community and voluntary sector forms a very significant and under-acknowledged part of the Irish economy and society, comprising 11,500 community and voluntary organisations, more than half a million volunteers, over 100,000 staff and with a combined turnover of €5.7 billion a year.

Community and voluntary organisations provide human, social and community services in all key areas of our national life. They are active in relation to: arts; culture; wellbeing; sport; literacy; community development; education; children; housing; employment; domestic violence; marriage support; inter-culturalism; LGBT; older people; environment; legal rights; animal rights; overseas development; Travellers; health; suicide; disability; social care; end of life care; volunteering; and social justice. Collectively such organisations, and many like them, comprise the community and voluntary sector.

Its aims and delivery are multi-fold and include encouraging community ownership and empowering individuals and communities; assisting with flexibility and collaboration in delivery of key community services; providing a responsive approach to identifying and meeting needs, while working effectively to promote and deliver social cohesion.

In the process the sector provides and inspires additional resources of funding, energy, endeavour and commitment that is simply not - and never will be - available to the state.

This 'resource' is what we call Societal Value.

A priority for public policy must be to ensure the creation of an enabling ecosystem to sustain and enhance Societal Value, now and into the future.

A key factor in acknowledging and promoting Societal Value will be a recognition that the current drift towards a commissioning or funding model that focuses exclusively on minimising public spending and cost to the state risks seriously compromising quality and effectiveness of services.

Reductions in funding and viewing organisations as mere service providers, while their social role remains unacknowledged, threatens the viability and capacity of the entire community and voluntary sector and undermines its unique ability to deliver Societal Value.

We strongly believe that government policy on commissioning must explicitly support Societal Value, emphasising high quality, efficiency, responsiveness, accountability and equity. In addition, Ireland should avail of all options permitting a greater use of social clauses when transposing the new European Directives on Public Procurement.

Public bodies should work in conjunction with the community and voluntary sector to focus on maximising Societal Value. Commissioning of public services should not create barriers or disincentives to co-operation between public service funders, or to collaboration with the community & voluntary sector to achieve better outcomes.

Commissioning is not identical to procurement or competitive tendering. Social clauses should be used to the greatest extent permitted under European Directives, and when competitive tendering approaches are used, smaller community and voluntary organisations must not be excluded from tendering through artificial barriers such as contract size or capacity to accept risk, especially when local, community and/or specialist services are being sought.

When commissioning human, social or community services, competitive tendering should only be used where this will demonstrably achieve a higher level of Societal Value creation.

Grant-allocation should remain a core method of funding available to those who commission. Grants should, in fact, be the preferred approach where organisations provide a specialist service or serve a specific community, especially disadvantaged or 'hard to reach' communities.

These are all practical steps. They will help to ensure that a social recovery takes place alongside the economic recovery that has begun and will align overall procurement policy to this goal.

More importantly, they will also ensure that the Societal Value emanating from the hundreds of thousands of people who contribute to our economy and society through the community and voluntary sector will be maintained, cherished and encouraged into the future - for the benefit of all our futures.

Deirdre Garvey
Chief Executive Officer
The Wheel

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Clann Credo – the Social Investment Fund

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Chief Executive Officer
The Community Foundation for Ireland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 560,000 people volunteer their time every year in Ireland's 11,500 community and voluntary organisations (8,500 of which are registered charities). These non-profit organisations employ over 100,000 staff, involve over 50,000 people as trustees/board members, and make up Ireland's community and voluntary sector, with a combined income of €5.7 billion a year. While all these organisations are involved in different work, they have one thing in common: they take the same basic not-for-private-profit, **community and voluntary approach** to their work.

The community and voluntary approach is a process that activates, encourages, empowers and supports groups of people to join together in activities that promote their common interest, improve their communities and benefit all of society.

Its key features include:

- responsive, tailored and holistic approaches to identifying and meeting needs;
- flexibility, innovation, integration and collaboration in delivery;
- ownership, involvement and empowerment of service beneficiaries and the wider community;
- contributing to building social capital and social cohesion and
- bringing additional sources of funding to support their work that would not be available to the State.

This approach delivers significant **Societal Value** for Ireland's people. Societal Value comprises both financial and non-financial value creation by using resources to produce a good and just society.

If society is to continue to benefit from the Societal Value generated by the community and voluntary approach, then public policy must create an **enabling ecosystem** that will sustain it and make it better into the future. A commissioning or funding model that focuses exclusively on minimising public spending and the cost of transactions to the State, risks compromising quality and effectiveness, not only in the short term, but also longer term.

This report identifies the unique value of the community and voluntary approach to supporting people and communities, its significance in today's Ireland, and highlights what is needed for the approach to thrive in the future. We have long established public policy and law in Ireland that recognises and sustains the public-benefit status of charities – we need to make sure that we sustain the Societal Value provided by the community and voluntary sector in the years ahead.

Reductions in funding combined with the discernible emergence of a "services paradigm" whereby organisations are viewed by funders from a financial perspective as purely service providers with their broader social role not recognised, risks reducing the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to sustain the unique Societal Value it creates.

Emerging Government policy towards commissioning services and moving to outcomes-based funding models must recognise, and explicitly seek to support, the financial and non-financial **Societal Value** inherent in the community and voluntary approach.

In order to sustain this Societal Value, statutory funding models (including commissioning, grant-making, procurement, and competitive tendering processes)

need to **take into account the full range of Societal Value (financial and non-financial)** that different providers demonstrate in the way in which they propose to meet the particular service objectives being sought.

The characteristics of **high quality, efficiency, responsiveness, accountability** and **equity** should underpin the provision of good public services, whether delivered by a community and voluntary organisation, private sector organisation or a public sector body.

Collaboration is vital in the delivery of good quality public services. Commissioning of public services should not create barriers or disincentives to co-operation between public service providers whether they be in the statutory or community and voluntary sector.

There is an opportunity for public bodies to work in conjunction with the community and voluntary sector to develop an **enabling framework and ecosystem for the funding and regulation of services delivered by the community and voluntary sector**: one that is focused on maximising Societal Value creation, is explicitly supportive of the unique community and voluntary approach, and that utilises and reinforces its strengths.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

Commissioning should take place within a Societal Value framework

- 1 A coherent policy rationale for commissioning is an essential starting point, including a shared clear definition of commissioning and commissioning tasks, as recommended in the Centre for Effective Services report *Commissioning in Human, Social and Community Services*. This rationale must be provided for as a matter of urgency as commissioning approaches are increasingly applied. We understand commissioning to be a **strategic planning process linking resource allocation with assessed current and future needs. Commissioning is broader than procurement or competitive tendering.**
- 2 Public commissioners should be required to demonstrate that the outcome of any commissioning exercise maximises **Societal Value** (see model on page 17). Indeed, all public service arrangements should require Societal Value. This means that public services should be funded on the basis of ensuring quality, efficiency, responsiveness, accountability and equity, with appropriate weights given to each. Government departments, statutory agencies and local authorities should review existing approaches to commissioning / funding public services to ensure they are aligned to the maximisation of Societal Value.
- 3 The process of service commissioning should involve **communities in identifying and agreeing their need** and in determining appropriate outcomes. Commissioners should adopt a whole-of-person and/or whole-of-community approach in the process. Commissioners must be clear about what is meant by outcomes; how they will be measured; who will have responsibility for identifying needs; how they will fully engage communities in identifying and agreeing needs and outcomes; and how the achievement of outcomes will be assessed and monitored.
- 4 Government should develop guidelines and training to ensure local government, statutory bodies and government departments that allocate public funds have the **capacity and capability** to effectively commission and to deliver on a Societal Value creation framework. There also needs to be investment in building the skills and capacity of community and voluntary organisations to participate and succeed in all commissioning, procurement, tendering and/or grant funding agreement negotiation exercises.

To sustain Societal Value we need coherent funding models to support the community and voluntary approach

- 5 Funding models should be based on a proportionate and sustainable **sharing of risk** between funder and service provider, with supports made available to help providers to manage risk and to meet regulatory requirements.
- 6 In order to obviate the risk of degrading Societal Value, when commissioning human, social or community services, **competitive tendering** should only be used where this will demonstrably achieve a higher level of Societal Value creation.
- 7 **Grant-allocation** should remain a core mode of funding available to commissioners. Irrespective of whether funds are applied using grant, grant-in-aid or tendering approaches, **multi-annual funding** allocations should be agreed and funding should provide for full-cost recovery. Grants should be the preferred approach where organisations provide a specialist service or serve a specific community, especially disadvantaged or 'hard to reach' communities.
- 8 Service commissioning should have due regard to the **scale** of community and voluntary organisations and not exclude smaller organisations from consideration, especially when local, community and/or specialist services are being sought. Public funders should ensure that community and voluntary organisations are not disadvantaged in situations where they are in direct competition for public funding with profit-making businesses (e.g. on basis of contract size or capacity to accept risk).
- 9 Ireland when **transposing the new European Directive on Public Procurement** should avail of all the options permitting a greater use of social clauses.
- 10 When competitive tendering approaches are used, public commissioners should use **social clauses** in these tenders to the greatest extent permitted under European Directives in order to ensure that Societal Value is maximised when public services are being commissioned in that manner.

We need to enable the ecosystem of community and voluntary organisations

- 11 **Regulation should be credible, proportionate, supportive and adequately resourced.** Public funders and regulators should work together to rationalise reporting and regulatory compliance requirements; eliminate multiple-reporting; reduce the administrative load and ensure that volunteers continue to be willing to serve on boards.
- 12 Government should appoint a **Minister for Community and Voluntary Activity** to work with the community and voluntary sector to develop a national strategy, incorporating a coherent long-term funding framework for the sector.
- 13 **Community and voluntary organisations must sustain public appreciation and support for the Societal Value inherent in their work**, having a responsibility to demonstrate best practice in governance; orient their work around achieving outcomes with the communities they serve; and seek to collaborate at all times with relevant partners.
- 14 **Collaborative approaches** to commissioning and engaging with communities and the community and voluntary sector should be supported.

CHAPTER 01

THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY APPROACH

This research was commissioned to identify and describe the unique value of the community and voluntary approach to supporting people and communities, the **Societal Value** it creates, and to identify what is needed for the approach to thrive in the years ahead.

1.1. Importance of the Community and Voluntary Sector

Over 560,000 people volunteer their time every year in Ireland's 11,500 community and voluntary organisations (8,500 of which are registered charities). These non-profit organisations employ over 100,000 staff, involve over 50,000 people as trustees/board members, with a combined income of over €5.7 billion a year, representing approximately 3.6 per cent of GDP¹. This is larger than the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors combined.

Community and voluntary organisations are often focused on issues of national or international concern, including complex social problems and long-term social and environmental challenges.

In many cases, community organisations are particularly concerned with working for change in disadvantaged areas or with disadvantaged groups (e.g. people with disabilities, lone parents, Travellers and new communities). In this context, the community and voluntary approach seeks to build the capacity of people to organise: to give voice to their needs and

experiences, to make collective decisions on behalf of their communities and to participate in decision-making that affects them.

Community and voluntary organisations do not just add to Ireland's social fabric, in many cases they are the fabric, often at the heart of their locality, acting as a springboard for many socially beneficial activities. From the GAA and the important history of religious organisations in Ireland, through to those involved in theatre, music, culture, Irish language, preservation of Irish fauna and flora, heritage conservation and more, community and voluntary organisations often safeguard unique aspects of Ireland and Irish culture that would be otherwise lost to current and future generations.

As shown in Table 1, community and voluntary organisations are active in diverse areas. What these organisations share is not their areas of focus, but a commonality of approach, which distinguishes the community and voluntary sector from both the public and private commercial sectors.

¹ INKEx Irish Non Profits: What Do We Know, (2011, pp. 5-7).

Table 1. Activities of Irish non-profits classified according to the Johns Hopkins University international classification of non-profit organisations (ICNPO)

International Classification		Primary Focus	Could Describe
CULTURE & RECREATION	Culture & arts	7.9%	20.0%
	Sports	2.8%	11.3%
	Recreation & social clubs	3.6%	18.2%
EDUCATION & RESEARCH	Primary education	0.6%	7.1%
	Secondary education	0.6%	6.7%
	Higher education	1.4%	6.7%
	Other education	5.1%	30.0%
	Research	2.0%	10.5%
DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING	Economic, social & community development	6.1%	17.8%
	Housing	1.2%	3.2%
	Employment & training	0.6%	7.7%
SOCIAL SERVICES	Social services	6.3%	18.6%
	Emergency & relief services	1.4%	7.5%
	Income support & maintenance	0.0%	2.2%
ENVIRONMENT	Environment	2.6%	11.3%
	Animal protection	1.2%	2.6%
CIVIL RIGHTS & ADVOCACY	Civic & advocacy	3.4%	16.8%
	Law & legal services	1.0%	4.7%
	Political	1.0%	6.3%
HEALTH	Hospitals & rehabilitation	1.2%	5.1%
	Nursing homes	0.0%	1.0%
	Mental health	4.9%	14.0%
	Physical health	4.3%	14.2%
PHILANTHROPY & VOLUNTARISM	Grant-making foundations and trusts	1.2%	3.4%
	Promotion of volunteering	3.0%	12.8%
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	Trades unions	0.2%	0.6%
	Business & professional associations	0.8%	1.4%
INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES/OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT		6.7%	4.0%
RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS		1.2%	3.6%
OTHER		29.4%	36.0%

Source: The Wheel (2014)

1.2. The Community and Voluntary Approach

The community and voluntary sector approach to serving and supporting can be understood broadly as a **process** that activates, encourages, empowers and supports groups of people to join together in activities that promote their common interest, to improve their communities and **create Societal Value** in the process.

The approach is underpinned by four key principles:

- **Empowerment:** working with people to enable them to take more control of decisions that affect them. Promoting the real experience and voice of disadvantaged, isolated or vulnerable communities;
- **Working collectively on a voluntary basis:** supporting people to come together to identify the things that they want to change in their community or society, and to work together with others to achieve that change. Promoting active citizenship among excluded groups in disadvantaged areas and giving people a 'stake' in their community;
- **Participation:** giving people the right to participate in decisions and structures that affect their lives. Providing supports to empower people who are disadvantaged, isolated or vulnerable so they can participate in decision-making with public authorities and other institutions and groups in society;
- **Social justice, equality and caring for others:** achieving social change that enables individuals, groups and communities to realise their full potential and to flourish, uninhibited by unfair or discriminatory social structures and systems. Delivering services based on an ethos of care and concern for the dignity of every person. Working to change the economic and social conditions that affect disadvantaged communities or disadvantaged groups.

1.3. Case Examples of the Approach

In the following section are case examples of community and voluntary organisations around Ireland. These case studies are designed to illustrate the characteristics of the approach and the Societal Value they create.

Case Studies

Lakelands Area Retreat & Cancer Support Centre (LARCC), Co. Westmeath

LARCC is an example of people with direct experience of a life event wishing to provide supports and services to others in a similar situation and the creative use of local assets.

Ita Bourke was in her thirties and working in a busy Dublin based company when she was diagnosed with cancer. While she received the necessary treatment, she felt the need for emotional and psychological support and felt that this was lacking in the Irish health system. She travelled to The Bristol Centre in England, a residential centre that provided psycho-social support to cancer patients and survivors.

While in treatment she met two other cancer patients, Frank Russell and Karen Daly, who also felt emotional support services for cancer patients were lacking. Following discussions with Ita about the benefits she derived from her stay at The Bristol Centre, these three decided to set up a similar residential model in Ireland that would help cancer patients and their families.

The new organisation, LARCC, was set up as a charity and a company limited by guarantee. A voluntary board of directors oversaw the development of the centre. Fundraising events, donations and a mortgage secured the purchase of a suitable house and the hiring of professional staff to provide complementary therapies, counselling, on-site nursing services, administration and catering. The centre was opened by the late Brian Lenihan TD, the then Junior Minister for Health, in November 2002, two weeks after Ita had passed away from her cancer.

The service very quickly began to outgrow the premises and the demand for residential places.

Nearby in Multyfarnham, the Franciscan Friary's agricultural college was closed as a result of the merger of a number of colleges nationwide at that time. A heritage building, it was then unused and the Franciscans were anxious to ensure it did not fall into dereliction. LARCC board members became aware of this unused space and approached the Franciscans to see if LARCC's services might be considered as a suitable use for some of the building.

The Franciscans held public consultations in relation to the disposal of 40 acres and the building. It was decided that the GAA would be offered 15 acres to develop a centre of excellence in Gaelic games, other land would be sold to fund the refurbishment and upgrading of the building and LARCC would be offered a long-term lease on the refurbished building to provide day and residential cancer support services.

The refurbishment was tailored to accommodate the needs of LARCC clients as feedback from staff and clients indicated that it was very important that the centre would have a homely environment and that it did not mimic a hospital or institutional setting. The co-founders also emphasised to staff that a homely environment came from how they approached their work with clients and the importance of empathy and understanding as well as tailoring services to the needs of each individual.

Meeting and responding to new demands is an important part of LARCC's ethos. For example, Manual Lymph Drainage (MLD) is a treatment that is used for clients who have a compromised lymphatic system due to surgery or radiotherapy. MLD treatment is generally very poorly provided by the HSE on a national level. LARCC funded two of its nurses to train in MLD to provide a regular service to clients.

Ita wanted LARCC to be as accessible as possible to all cancer patients, cancer survivors and their families, irrespective of their ability to pay. Most clients benefit from up to five sessions and these are provided free of charge and thereafter a modest donation is sought.

Over the years, referral pathways have been developed with hospitals, General Practitioners, other cancer services and hospices. LARCC also engages in activities in the local community to raise awareness about cancer.

Keeping House, Co. Longford

Keeping House is an example of local people identifying and responding to local needs.

In 2011, Mary Walsh and Mary Morrissey, who knew each other already from parish and school committees, were among the attendees at the first workshop of a course for social enterprise run in Longford². They identified an opportunity to provide house-keeping services to the elderly living in the community. They approached other local people who they knew might be interested, and a voluntary committee was set up.

The committee engaged with the active retirement and active age groups in County Longford, Longford Warmer Homes (a social enterprise that provides heating solutions to disadvantaged groups and which addresses fuel poverty), the Public Health Nurses, HSE Home Help and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to test the feasibility of their idea.

The basic idea was to support elderly people to remain in their homes by providing them with everyday living support. In general, HSE home help packages do not cover many aspects of daily living that the elderly need support with. The needs identified included cleaning, cooking, gardening, washing, shopping and house repairs.

The committee needed to find a way to finance the project in a manner that would be inclusive but also

financially sustainable. The project won a grant from Clann Credo as part of the SEL programme and also received a small lottery grant and was successful in their application for a Tús worker. However, this was not considered sufficient for financial sustainability and an innovative payment system was developed. A mixed client base was developed whereby people without the means to pay for services would receive services for free from Keeping House, but private clients (individuals or businesses) who could pay, would pay an hourly fee. It was made clear to private clients that this was the ethos of the service and that effectively their fees would subsidise services to people who were in need and unable to pay.

Volunteers were identified to help deliver the services. In addition, local people were contracted to supply services and the committee members also engaged in service provision.

Through their community networks, the committee members have been able to make others aware of the plight of older people living alone. Links have been developed with other service providers such as Longford Warmer Homes, which carries out home repairs, and REVAMP 3D, which renovates and recycles furniture. Referrals to Keeping House are made by the HSE, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and many other local groups.

² *Social Enterprise Longford (SEL) was funded by the local development company, Longford Community Resources Limited*

Ability West, Co. Galway

Ability West is an example of high quality service provision achieved through the empowerment and participation of service users.

Ability West was set up in 1962 by the parents and friends of children with intellectual disabilities. Its aim is to enable people with an intellectual disability to realise their dreams and ambitions. It now serves 530 children and adults with intellectual disability in the west of Ireland.

The organisation has a voluntary Board of Directors, a professional management team, a branch membership base and volunteer supporters. It has 55 centres located across Galway City and County providing a range of day and residential services and ensuring local connections in the community. Ability West is also patron of four special schools located in Ballinasloe, Carraroe, Galway and Tuam.

Services have evolved to incorporate service user involvement in their design and delivery as much as possible. The service mantra is 'Nothing about me without me'.

Service users are encouraged to live the life of their choice. They are involved in developing their own personal plan which sets out the goals they wish to achieve. The range of services provided by Ability West aims to support these personal plans. These include therapeutic programmes, community-based activities, health and leisure activities, access to further education and employment opportunities and access to supported living options. Staff work with service users to build their confidence and skills and to identify and overcome the challenges they can face in living and working in a community setting of their choice.

For those service users requiring residential facilities or supported living accommodation, they are encouraged to personalise their home, supported to maintain community and family connections, to engage with local communities and to use community services. Service users are linked into local facilities such as gyms and fitness clubs.

St. Joseph's Training Centre provides a three year rehabilitative training programme which provides personal development and occupational training to service users. Service users, with the support of staff, develop an individualised training plan with the aim of completing a FETAC approved course. Ability West recognised the challenges that people with intellectual disabilities can face. It developed links with EmployAbility Galway and set up two social enterprises, Pretty Fingers, a hair salon, and Magpie Creations, a jewellery maker, to provide work experience opportunities for trainees.

Many service users express the desire to have a friend. In response to this need Ability West developed the **Best Buddies** programme. This is a friendship initiative in association with NUIG and GMIT where students are matched with service users to befriend. Service users are facilitated to attend and contribute to different forums and events, e.g. Ability West's Service Users Council made up of elected representatives of services across the City and County, the national HSE Patient's Forum, etc.

Irish Men's Sheds

Irish Men's Sheds is an example of a movement that builds social capital and community cohesion.

The Irish Men's Sheds Association (ISMA) was set up in January 2011 with the purpose of supporting the development and sustainability of Men's Sheds on the island of Ireland. The number of Men's Sheds in Ireland has grown exponentially since 2009 and there are now 290 Men's Sheds on the island of Ireland where 5,000 to 6,500 men (mainly) meet on a weekly basis.

A Men's Shed is a dedicated, friendly and welcoming meeting place where men, regardless of age, background or ability, come together and undertake a variety of mutually agreed activities. The aim of Men's Sheds is to enhance or maintain the well-being of men.

The idea for Men's Sheds was developed in Australia in mid-1998. They were developed to use a bottom-up approach that places power in the hands of men to make their own choices and to actively shape their

own future. Men are empowered to self-manage their own Shed and their active participation in a Shed, including its organisation, in the company of other men has positive value for them and for their families and communities.

A Men's Shed generally operates from a workshop-type place or space in the community. Usually a few men come together to get a Shed off the ground and word of mouth attracts in other men. Sheds are open to men of all ages and backgrounds and all are treated as equals and co-participants in a Shed's activities. There are no set activities or format that a Shed must follow: the men decide for themselves. As a result Men's Sheds around Ireland engage in a huge variety of activities including supporting Tidy Towns, building boats, repairing bicycles, etc. However, the activity engaged in is in many ways a tool or by-product of the Men's

Shed. The key driving force behind a Shed is its social aspect. As Barry Sheridan, CEO of IMSA says *'Men don't talk face to face but they will talk shoulder to shoulder.'*

In a Shed, men mix together who would not have done so in the past thus helping to break down social exclusion and isolation. Men gain a sense of purpose, control and achievement. They learn from each other. They have improved well-being.

The earliest Men's Sheds in Ireland were created through collaborations between service providers and communities. Family Resource Centres and Local Development Companies played, and continue to play, an important role in supporting Men's Sheds.

For example, Tipperary Men's Shed arose out of a health training day for the Men's Development Network held in Knockanrawley Resource Centre in 2009. During this meeting a video clip of Barry Golding talking about Men's Sheds was shown to those attending, which generated much interest amongst the participants. The Knockanrawley Resource Centre

responded to this by including the development of a Men's Shed in its community development plan. The Men's Shed commenced with an organic garden and the men are involved with a local free food project with supermarkets in the town. The Shed then expanded to include woodwork and metalwork activities. Insurance for activities became a challenge which the men overcame by building a shelter for themselves.

Another example is Kilcock Men's Shed, which was set up in 2014. The group located an old building in need of refurbishment, which they did themselves as the group included men with skills in engineering, plastering, electrical, etc. Funding for an eight week gardening course was sourced and the course was open to all of the men for free. The men met with the tutor every Monday to decide what they would like to have covered in the course. In association with Kilcock Tidy Towns, the men have developed a community garden.

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre's (Pavee Point) Health Project

Pavee Point's primary healthcare project is an example of engaging people from a specific community to deliver services to others within that community and in the process provide training and employment opportunities.

Pavee Point was established in 1985 with the aim of providing training and leadership opportunities for Travellers. Core values that underpin the way the organisation functions include partnership working and community development and the organisation is comprised of members of the Traveller and Roma community and the settled population. A key part of the work of Pavee Point is to create the conditions where Traveller and Roma men and women are supported to be leaders, participants, community workers, advocates and campaigners.

Through its contact with the Traveller and Roma community, Pavee Point recognised early in its development that health was a key issue for the community. Various pieces of research and feedback from Travellers had indicated significant health inequalities between Travellers and the settled community.

Pavee Point responded to this identified need by developing a primary healthcare programme to address information deficits and barriers to accessing healthcare for Travellers. The concept was to train Travellers to deliver health awareness and education in their communities and to act as a 'bridge' between Travellers and the health system.

The Primary Healthcare for Travellers Programme was successfully piloted in three areas in the eastern region, funded by the then Eastern Regional Health Authority. Pavee Point documented the learning and shared it with other Traveller projects. There are currently about 30 Primary Healthcare for Travellers Programmes operating around Ireland. Most employ between 5 and 6 Travellers, mainly women, and nationally there are now around 300 Traveller Community Health Workers. In recent years, men have also become

involved and this has enabled the development of suitable approaches to how men's health information is delivered. For example, the Irish Heart Foundation mobile van will be invited to set up on site beside a football match.

The programme recognises that there are cultural differences in how Travellers give and receive information, that literacy is a factor that needs to be taken into consideration and that flexibility in how and when the programme is delivered is key. For example, Travellers have a preference for informal chats; visual aids (e.g. symbols and pictures) are used to explain and capture information, and Travellers are visited by the Traveller Community Health Workers in their own homes or on halting sites at whatever time of the day or night suits them.

Travellers also experience very high unemployment rates and the programme afforded an opportunity to train and employ Travellers to provide healthcare messages in their own community. The programme helped to build the capacity of and to empower

Traveller women by boosting self-esteem and confidence and providing a progression pathway into further education, advocacy and employment.

The programme has also underlined the importance of the social determinants of health, e.g. living conditions, and has provided evidence that Pavee Point has been able to use to influence policymakers and to work collaboratively with other agencies. For example, cultural awareness training for healthcare workers has been provided to ensure that services are more accessible for Travellers. Pavee Point piloted the use of an ethnic identifier with Tallaght hospital in 1994 and it is now being introduced into Connolly hospital. Work is underway with the Rotunda hospital to develop culturally appropriate ways to deliver health messages for pregnant women in language that Travellers understand. Pavee Point has collaborated with national organisations such as the Irish Cancer Society, the Irish Heart Foundation and the Asthma Society to develop culturally appropriate literature and also to obtain training for Traveller Community Health Workers.

An Cosán, Tallaght

An Cosán is an example of innovation and creativity in addressing local needs and building social capital.

An Cosán was set up by Drs Ann-Louise Gilligan and Katherine Zappone to help disadvantaged communities through education. They firmly believe that education is the pathway out of poverty. Through the first personal development course, it became evident that a number of the participants were interested in the concept behind An Cosán and they were invited to form the first management committee. At the end of each course provided through An Cosán, participants were asked what they were interested in learning about. In this way, the development of courses was driven by grassroots community leaders and course participants and this ethos continues to underpin the work of An Cosán.

All of the programmes in An Cosán work from a model of transformative community education and active learner leadership which develop transferable skills such as leadership, collaborative working, problem

solving, critical thinking, IT and communication skills. Learner-centred teaching and learning methodologies build on prior knowledge and experience. Learners are encouraged to support and learn from each other and a grassroots leadership network has been developed.

The range of courses and services expanded over the years and in 1999 a purpose-built premises was opened to bring all of the courses and activities together under one roof in the heart of the community.

The founders recognised the importance of providing childcare to enable participation in training and education. Consultation with the community also confirmed that childcare provision was a need for Tallaght West. An Cosán developed a course to train women to become childminders. This subsequently developed into training to support people to set up

their own childcare enterprise. Out of this came the idea of developing a childcare social franchise and the Fledglings concept was born.

The Fledglings concept takes the commercial franchising idea and applies it to a social issue, in this case childcare provision. Potential franchisees are provided with accredited training in an evidence-based curriculum (HighScope) and support to set up a childcare enterprise under the Fledglings banner.

Dara Hogan, a board member, developed the Fledglings concept and he won a Social Entrepreneurs Ireland award which enabled the franchise to scale up through a combination of new start-ups and acquisition of childcare facilities from other organisations such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. There are now 10 Fledglings services across Dublin employing around 90 people, most of whom are from the local community. Fledglings also provides work placements for participants on FETAC accredited courses in childcare run by An Cosán. Three hundred and sixty-seven families benefit from the Fledglings early-years model in disadvantaged communities across the city.

Innovation continues to be a key component of how An Cosán operates. Recognising the potential of e-learning for community education, An Cosán established the Virtual Community College (VCC) in 2013, and Liz Waters received a Social Entrepreneurs Ireland award in respect of VCC in 2014. VCC is now working with Carlow IT to develop community hubs around Ireland in disadvantaged communities in Longford, Limerick, Clare, Waterford, and Donegal.

1.4. Key Features of the Approach

From these cases examples, it can be seen that a number of key features are common to the community and voluntary approach. These can be summarised as follows:

- Ownership, involvement and empowerment of service beneficiaries and the wider community;

- Responsive, tailored and holistic approaches to identifying and meeting needs;
- Flexibility, innovation, integration and collaboration in delivery;
- Contributing to building social capital and social cohesion, and
- Bringing additional sources of funding to support their work that would not be available to the State.

Involving and empowering individuals and communities

are necessary steps for development and for positive change at local level to take place (e.g. Ability West).

Working on the ground in a community means that **tailored responses to identified needs** can be addressed at local level (e.g. Keeping House) and innovative and creative approaches to meeting needs are sought (An Cosán).

Additionally, State policies, programmes and services are more likely to be efficient and effective if those with direct experience of the problems, and those who live in communities affected by these problems, are **involved in the design and implementation** of solutions (e.g. Pavee Point). In this way, the community and voluntary approach can help people to create and influence solutions to gaps in services or facilities, and help people create and influence initiatives that can improve their circumstances (e.g. LARCC).

A further contribution of applying the principles of the community and voluntary approach is the **strengthening of democratic life and social inclusion and building social capital** and social cohesion (Men's Sheds).

All of the case examples have brought **sources of funding that are not generally available** to the State to progress their initiatives. These have included philanthropy, public donations, scholarships, sponsorship, awards and volunteer time and commitment.

Taken together these key features of the community and voluntary sector approach constitute the **Societal Value** that the approach creates.

1.5. Conclusion

A fundamental characteristic of community and voluntary organisations is that they involve voluntary action by people who are motivated by a common set of values and who seek to achieve their organisation's mission. The community and voluntary approach is underpinned by the principles of empowerment, participation, collective working, social justice, equality and caring for others. A key strength of the approach is that it has developed ways of including service users in the governance of services, from strong links with local communities, service user feedback, participation on voluntary boards of management and community ownership of services.

As Ireland moves from economic recovery to social recovery, it is timely to reconsider the importance of Societal Value creation in sustaining Ireland's social fabric. This is explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 02

Creating Societal Value using the Community and Voluntary Approach

Societal Value is **using resources to produce a good and just society**. As this implies, not only government resources but also private, community and charitable resources can and do generate Societal Value. This chapter presents a framework for capturing Societal Value and identifies how the community and voluntary approach contributes to creating and sustaining Societal Value.

2.1. Societal Value

Public services are non-profit activities that benefit the public by providing goods and services to meet people's needs. Community and voluntary organisations provide many public services in much the same way as public bodies that are State owned and managed. They share the same non-profit approach and the same orientation to achieve a public benefit through their work.

Good public services involve a range of dimensions. Measuring public services in solely financial or economic terms is inadequate. Societal Value is created not just in the output of public services but also in the **processes and ethos** involved in service provision. Societal Value creation involves both **financial** and **non-financial dimensions**, and thus encompasses the full value of the work of organisations delivering public services, whether they are community and voluntary organisations or public bodies.

2.2. A Societal Value Framework

Figure 2 presents a framework for Societal Value creation, built around the core elements³ necessary to maximise Societal Value. These core elements are:

- Quality
- Responsiveness
- Accountability
- Equity
- Efficiency

³ Bannister 2001 (cited in Braaksma et al 2006) and Bannister (2002)

Societal Value

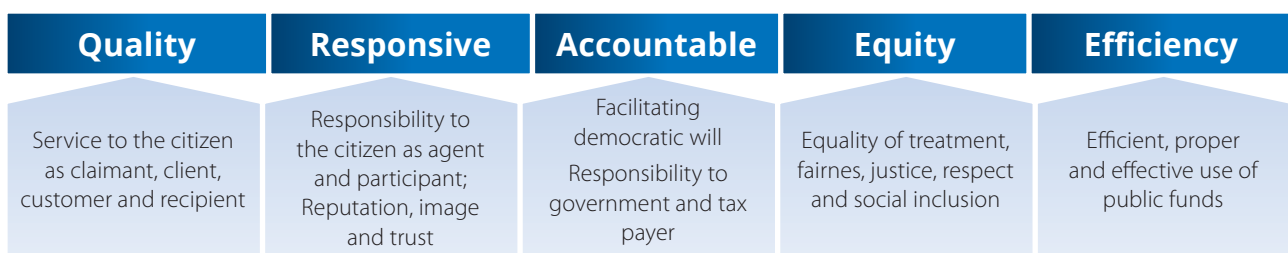


Figure 1. Societal Value Framework for Public Service Commissioning⁴

⁴ Based on Moore, Bannister and Le Grand

To ensure service quality, the internal organisation of services⁵ needs good quality management information and data to support decision-making; needs to attract, retain, motivate and empower staff and to foster staff creativity; needs effective internal communications; and needs to stay abreast of developments in service delivery in all sectors.

In terms of responsiveness, services need flexibility to meet public demands and to retain a good public image and trust.

For accountability, services need to ensure access to information for the citizen; alignment with Government policy and transparency.

For equity, services need to match external benchmarks of equality, fairness, justice, respect and social inclusion.

Finally, to ensure financial efficiency, services need to avoid future costs; have good processes to control/reduce fraud and waste; achieve cost savings; foster greater staff efficiency; increase capacity/throughput; bring about positive cost-benefit, deliver positive net-present-value and a positive return on investment; and reduce risk.

Good practice in the community and voluntary sector exhibits all these characteristics of Societal Value creation.

2.3. Contribution of the Community and Voluntary Approach to Societal Value Creation

The community and voluntary approach contributes to the creation of Societal Value in a number of different ways. These include mission focus, voluntarism, quality provision, responsiveness, empowerment and community ownership, innovation and integration, advocacy, equity, efficiency and accountability and financial contribution.

2.3.1. Mission

Separation from both the public and private sectors has traditionally led the community and voluntary sector to be defined in negative or oppositional terms, as 'non-profit', 'non-governmental' organisations. However, increasingly, organisations in the sector explicitly define themselves as **standing for positive social change**, whether in terms of responding to wrongs or harm in people's lives, or else working towards a vision of a better society.

The aim of creating Societal Value — in the form of a good and just society — is evident in the mission statements of many of Ireland's community and voluntary organisations. Table 2 illustrates how some of these organisations pursue the creation of Societal Value.

⁵ Bannister

Table 2. Examples of the Societal Value Goals of Ireland's Community and Voluntary Sector

ARTS	"...a high quality facility, which provides a base for year round development of the Arts" (<i>Birr Theatre and Arts Centre</i>)	
	"...cultivation and advancement of the musical arts in Ireland, especially among the young. To organise and promote an annual Music Festival or Feis Ceoil. To promote the study and cultivation of Irish Music.." (<i>Feis Ceoil Association</i>)	CULTURE
WELLBEING	"... a future where all men have the opportunity to improve and maintain their health and well-being by participating in a community Men's Shed." (<i>Irish Men's Sheds Association</i>)	
	"... children of all ages and abilities the opportunity to participate in gymnastics at a recreational or a competitive level in a supportive and friendly environment." (<i>Wexford Gymnastics Club</i>)	SPORT
LITERACY	"...making sure people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs." (<i>National Adult Literacy Agency</i>)	
	"... representatives from local employers, health professionals, people who are unemployed, teachers, elderly and youth. The members are volunteers and are committed to the social and economic development of the Crossmolina area." (<i>Crossmolina Community Development Council</i>)	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION	"To provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition." (<i>Edmund Rice Schools Trust Project Ltd</i>)	
	"... encourage and assist the development of a range of social housing services which complements the role of the Local Housing Authorities and meet the different and changing needs of various groups of the population." (<i>Irish Council for Social Housing</i>)	HOUSING
EMPLOYMENT	"... a free employment, education and enterprise service for people living in the catchment area." (<i>Northside Centre for the Unemployed</i>)	
	"... a number of services to families who are being physically, emotionally, sexually or mentally abused in their own home." (<i>Drogheda Women's & Children Refuge Centre</i>)	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
MARRIAGE SUPPORT	"... provide clients with a professional and ethical, Educational and Counselling service in a safe and confidential environment, promoting awareness, understanding, healing and helping love to grow." (<i>ACCORD</i>)	
	"... working towards an intercultural and inclusive Irish society where immigrant groups are achieving equality in economic, social, political and cultural aspects of Irish life." (<i>New Communities Partnership</i>)	INTER-CULTURALISM

ENVIRONMENT

"... preserve and protect Ireland's natural and built heritage. We are an independent charitable voice for the environment and for heritage issues." (*An Taisce*)

"... a human rights organisation which exists to promote equal access to justice for all. Our vision is of a society where everyone can access fair and accountable mechanisms to vindicate their rights." (*Free Legal Advice Centres*)

LEGAL RIGHTS**ANIMAL RIGHTS**

"... provide care to animals in Cork City and County that need our help" (*Cork Animal Care Society*)

"...a movement working to build a society, in Ireland and in Europe, that actively seeks to eradicate global poverty, injustice and inequality." (*Dóchas*)

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT**HEALTH**

"... delivering relevant and tangible care and support for people who suffer from Alzheimers Disease and their families." (*Western Alzheimers*)

"... to provide suicide and self-harm support services within 100 kilometres of everyone in Ireland." (*Pieta House*)

SUICIDE**DISABILITY**

"... support and empower disabled people to achieve Independent Living, and to actively participate as equal citizens in society by having choice and control." (*Donegal Centre for Independent Living*)

"... recognition of the role of the family carer, the provision of respite care, information and training while advocating for the rights and needs of carers at local, national and European levels." (*Caring for Carers*)

CARERS**END OF LIFE CARE**

"... to achieve dignity, comfort and choice for all people facing the end of life." (*Irish Hospice Foundation*)

"... to promote the value of volunteering and increase the range and quality of volunteering in Ireland." (*Volunteer Ireland*)

VOLUNTEERING**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

"... a more just society in which the rights, responsibilities and development of all people are promoted. The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice seeks to transform the structures, which give rise to inequality, poverty and exclusion." (*Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice*)

"... to increase the community and voluntary sector's capacity and capability to play its part in achieving a fair and just society in Ireland." (*The Wheel*)

SUPPORTING THE CV SECTOR

2.3.2. Voluntarism

There are three forms of voluntarism present in the community and voluntary sector.

Firstly, the most visible form of volunteering is perhaps the work of the 560,000 people who get involved in community and voluntary organisations on an annual basis, with individuals often giving a significant number of hours per week. Volunteering provides personally rewarding and meaningful activities and experience and for people who have been fortunate in life, it is also an opportunity to 'give something back' to society.

Secondly, the 'voluntary' sector gets its name from the fact that groups of people voluntarily came together to form an organisation and to pursue its mission on a not-for-profit basis.

The voluntary (and unremunerated) boards of directors of community and voluntary organisations involve an estimated 50,000 people giving their time to provide corporate governance, leadership and drive towards achieving the mission of their organisation. Board members take both legal and moral responsibility for the proper functioning of their organisations, and board members often have an active role in support of their organisation alongside the formal duties of board membership. Crucially, voluntary boards provide accountability by acting as guardians of an organisation's ethos and ensuring the services it provides remain true to its values.

Voluntary boards also act as dynamic democratic forums, where a mixture of people from different walks of life can deliberate and innovate about public policy and public services. Participation in such forums can contribute to the members reaching their full potential as **active citizens**.

The third group of volunteers are those who make donations and bequests to support community and voluntary organisations.

Therefore **a large majority of the adult population in Ireland are actively volunteering** in one or more of the ways described and, for many people, participation in one or more community and voluntary organisations is part of daily life. Such participation makes an important and meaningful contribution to sustaining democratic life.

2.3.3. Quality

Quality of service is not just about the immediate 'output' or service provided, but it is about the **process of delivering that service** (how people are engaged with or treated as service-users) and also a commitment to the achievement of sustained positive outcomes in the lives of service users and for the wider community and society. **The primary focus of service provision by community and voluntary organisations is to achieve the best outcomes for people in the most caring way possible.** For example, there is strong empirical evidence from studies of nursing home care that the care ethos of non-profit bodies results in better outcomes for service users compared to for-profit business models⁶.

The strong care ethos prevalent in community and voluntary organisations is often due to the motivation of their founders, who may be people who experienced the same difficulties that the service exists to address (e.g. the LARCC and Keeping House case examples). The empowerment and participation of service users and communities in the delivery of services similarly are drivers for higher quality service provision (e.g. the Ability West, An Cosán, Pavee Point and Men's Sheds case examples).

Another example of high quality service provision in Ireland is Pieta House. This centre for the prevention of self-harm or suicide has seen and helped nearly 17,000 people in suicidal distress or engaging in self-harm. The service has opened up a series of centres across Ireland, with a vision to have a centre within 100km of every person in Ireland.

Pieta House's services are based on years of psychological research about what works best for people who are suicidal. Pieta House provides almost 180 fully qualified therapists free of charge and a doctor's referral or a psychiatric report is not required.

Pieta House runs an annual fundraising walk, Darkness Into Light, which has raised public awareness and discussion about suicide. In 2015, it took place in 80 venues across Ireland and internationally, and nearly a quarter of a million people have taken part to date.

6 Comondore et al 2009

As public awareness of suicide is a necessary part in achieving the social change required in reducing the prevalence of self-harm and suicide, this awareness raising is an important part of the holistic mission of the service.

2.3.4. Responsiveness, Empowerment and Community Ownership

Community and voluntary action represents citizens coming together to address the needs of themselves and their communities, often with those who are better-off helping those who are less advantaged.

Community ownership, working closely with local people and involving service users in the production of their service are all characteristics of the community and voluntary approach, and they make community and voluntary organisations more sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people using their services. Many domestic violence services, addiction support services, conservation projects and arts organisations only exist because local people met an urgent local need.

The involvement of service users is empowering for people from disadvantaged circumstances, and avoids a situation where they are in a merely transactional relationship with a service upon which they are dependent. In this context, community ownership of a service is an important requirement in many cases, as this gives local people the ability to ensure that the service remains responsive to their needs.

For example, the Scottish Government has recognised the value of community ownership by establishing a Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) to support community based groups in Scotland to take a stake in or ownership of previously publicly owned land or buildings⁷.

The OECD has recommended a partnership approach in Ireland between citizens, other stakeholders and the State that recognises the value of user feedback and input in order to improve the quality of public services and public policy in responding to societal

need⁸. Active engagement by citizens builds trust in government and public services by supporting the development of responsibility and accountability⁹.

2.3.5. Innovation and Integration

The community and voluntary approach has innovation at its core. Sometimes innovation has been driven by a scarcity of funding, but more often it is a core ethos of community and voluntary organisations. The community and voluntary approach places people at the centre. This results in design of services that are accessible, affordable, that are user and needs-led and that are culturally appropriate (e.g. Pavee Point's health project).

A focus on innovative approaches can result in proven evidence-based models being adapted to an Irish context (e.g. Fledgling's use of the HighScope curriculum), early intervention and closing the gap between groups in society (e.g. An Cosán's education initiatives).

Knowledge of the local community, their needs and the existing infrastructure in a locality, both statutory and non-governmental, means that services can be integrated effectively through co-ordinated approaches and cross-referral mechanisms. These can be both formal and informal in nature (e.g. LARCC's links with other cancer services and information and support structures such as the CIS and Keeping House's links with the health services, social enterprises and other local service providers).

2.3.6. The Value of Advocacy

Just as freedom of speech is basic to democracy, advocacy by community and voluntary organisations with and on behalf of disadvantaged individuals and groups in society is essential to a healthy democracy.

Advocacy is not just about helping individuals secure access to services or their entitlements, it is also about the identification of systemic problems and developing ideas about how to improve public services and deliver

⁷ (www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk).

⁸ OECD (2008, p.184)

⁹ Boyle and MacCarthaigh (2011)

a higher level of Societal Value with available resources. As such, the independent voice of community and voluntary organisations plays an indispensable role in Ireland's democracy by articulating local and community concerns, providing interlocutors for policymakers, as well as being an informed voice on national issues, including long-term issues such as climate change and resource depletion which are major threats to Ireland's future prosperity.

The OECD¹⁰ identifies greater transparency, improved consultation and increased use of evidence in policy making as important internal processes for public service reform. The community and voluntary sector is a natural partner to collaborate on these developments.

For example, the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice's (VPSJ) focus on long-term change and the root causes of inequality and poverty provides an essential, complementary role to service delivery by the VPSJ and other organisations. The research work of the VPSJ about a Minimum Essential Standard of Living has been used by the Insolvency Service of Ireland in the development of their Guide to a Reasonable Standard of Living and Reasonable Living Expenses¹¹.

2.3.7. Equity

The community and voluntary sector's core principles of empowerment, voluntarism, participation and social justice all drive performance towards the fair and equitable delivery of services.

For example, local development organisations provide joined-up thinking and action to promote economic development in a local area while also focussing on disadvantaged communities to combat inequality and social exclusion. In one year, the 50+ rural and urban organisations in the Irish Local Development Network created over 550 full-time jobs; supported over 14,000 people into employment or self-employment; provided over 12,000 with self-employment supports; supported over 33,000 into education, training or labour market programmes; supported over 57,000

young people; and gave information to over 200,000 people. In addition, they provided a range of family supports and other measures designed to foster socially inclusive local economic development.

Another example is Family Resource Centres (FRCs). As bottom-up organisations, FRCs are rooted in disadvantaged areas. Their activities to empower and include service users in their governance and their approaches to sharing learning and fostering co-operation with other FRCs, all help to reinforce best practice in the equity of service delivery, as well as giving voice to disadvantaged groups.

2.3.8. Efficiency

Financial efficiency means delivering value for money and managing public funds carefully as an integral part of delivering good public services, whether by public bodies or community and voluntary organisations.

Alongside creating Societal Value through non-financial value creation (i.e. quality, responsiveness, accountability and equity), community and voluntary organisations also create Societal Value through financial value creation (i.e. through the additional funds they raise towards the services they provide for communities). Community and voluntary organisations are well aware of the need to provide value for public money. Financial efficiency has been driven in the sector by the reality of working with limited and variable income.

One of the great strengths of community-based services is their holistic approach, which emphasises prevention as well as amelioration of problems. This represents a major reduction of future costs and reduction of risks to public funds. However, these savings are too often discounted when the value of community and voluntary organisations is assessed.

In addition to efficiency in delivering quality outcomes based on careful management of their funds (whether from public or private charitable sources), community and voluntary organisations also add significant additional financial value to Irish society through both their role in the economy and the fiscal saving that results from their volunteerism and fundraising activity.

¹⁰ OECD (2008, p.11)

¹¹ (www.isi.gov.ie).

Non-state sources of income account for approximately 47 per cent of the €5.7 billion annual turnover of the sector¹². A very conservative estimate is that donations, philanthropy, earned income and other fundraising (such as from charity shops) provide at least €2.5 billion per annum to support Societal Value creation by community and voluntary organisations¹³. This is equivalent to five times the revenue from Local Property Tax.

If the Government were to seek to replicate all of the services provided by the 11,700+ organisations in the community and voluntary sector, major tax increases would be required, along the lines of a five percentage point increase in the standard rate of income tax¹⁴.

Examples of community and voluntary organisations that make a fiscal saving for the State are the Irish Cancer Society (ICS) and the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF). The ICS raised €20 million in 2013 (with just 3 per cent of this coming from the State), which was used to provide a wide range of care and support services. Similarly, the IHF raised €6.8 million (of which c.5% came from State co-funded projects) and provided a range of health promotion, resuscitation training, research, patient support, public information and advocacy services.

Given that cancer and heart disease are the two leading causes of mortality, and there is near-infinite demand for services relating to these and other health-related issues, the fundraising efforts of both these organisations provide an important supplement to tax-funded services. These are examples of a large range of services that the State would be under public pressure to provide (and fully fund through tax revenue) if community and voluntary organisations did not do so.

2.3.9. Accountability

Community and voluntary organisations are well aware of their duty to report to public funders and the taxpayer about how they use public funds allocated to their services.

In very many cases voluntary boards also report regularly to private philanthropists as well as publishing annual reports for donors and anyone interested in their operations.

The sector has led with best practice initiatives like **GovernanceCode.ie** and **GoodCharity.ie** in order to maintain public trust and confidence in their work and to give guidance to organisations about how to strengthen their boards and ensure accountability to stakeholders, as well as supporting voluntary boards to discharge their responsibilities. Many community and voluntary organisations have also voluntarily adopted the Statement of Recommended Practice for Financial Reporting by Charities (SORP) as a template for accounting and reporting.

Fundraising is obviously a major financial consideration for most community and voluntary organisations. The sector has developed a range of voluntary guidelines and codes, as well as training and support services, to ensure that fundraising is ethical and professional, and that donors can see clearly how their money is being spent. For example, the **Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising** commits organisations to ensure honesty, integrity and professionalism around fundraising¹⁵. The **Code of Conduct on Images and Messages** commits development-charities to avoid using stereotypic or sensational imagery and to ensure permission from people who are being depicted in a way that conforms to the highest standards of protection of vulnerable people¹⁶.

There are also best practice examples of transparency about the return to donors of their 'investment' in community and voluntary organisations. For example, the Irish Cancer Society and Irish Heart Foundation provide clear, easily understood material for donors that explain what they do with donations.

A number of professional organisations have emerged from the sector to assist the professionalisation and transparency of governance, fundraising and finances, including Fundraising Ireland, ICTR and The Wheel.

12 INKEx Irish Non Profits: What Do We Know, (2011, pp. 5-7).

13 Ibid

14 Tax Strategy Group (2013)

15 ICTR (February 2008)

16 Dóchas (2006)

In parallel, a number of organisations support the concept of philanthropy and have developed professional supports to enhance the effectiveness of charitable giving, including Philanthropy Ireland, the Community Foundation for Ireland and the Government-sponsored Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising¹⁷.

2.3.10. Financial Contribution

The financial contribution by the community and voluntary sector is generated by sourcing and using private and community resources to create Societal Value. Members of the public clearly support the goals and missions of community and voluntary organisations, and their support is for the voluntarism, independence, mission and ethos of those organisations, not just to fund quality and responsive services. The financial contribution of community and voluntary organisations is in addition to their role as service providers, and their role cannot be reduced to purely service provision without jeopardising this financial contribution.

2.4. Conclusion

The concept of Societal Value creation must be central to the discussion of how to improve public services and achieve ever-better outcomes for people in Ireland.

Decisions on the funding of public services provided by community and voluntary organisations must be informed by how these decisions will affect Societal Value creation.

The contribution of community and voluntary organisations emphasises the fact that they are **full** Societal Value creators (i.e. making both a **financial and non-financial** contribution).

The community and voluntary approach not only makes an irreplaceable contribution to Irish society through its practices, it also makes a positive contribution to the lives of the majority of people living in Ireland, as members of their communities,

volunteers, service users and donors. Future approaches to funding and regulation must support the Societal Value inherent in the community and voluntary approach.

If traditional public service values, as well as the ethos of the community and voluntary approach, are not sufficiently specified as requirements and outcomes in funding and regulatory arrangements for service provision, the Societal Value will not be maximised.

In particular, there is a significant risk that Societal Value will be lost if public funders take a narrow view that community and voluntary organisations are merely (social) enterprises competing for contracts to provide services. Such a narrow view risks diminishing both the fundraising capacity of the sector and its capacity to attract volunteers. Community and voluntary organisations are much more than just service enterprises.

The next chapters propose the elements of an ecosystem that will support and enable the community and voluntary approach and the Societal Value inherent in it.

17 Re-convened in June 2012

CHAPTER 03

ENABLING ECOSYSTEM

The on-going development of community and voluntary organisations is testament to their commitment to maximising Societal Value from their work and from previous chapters we can see the elements of this Societal Value that need to be supported and enabled if Ireland wants to sustain this approach.

In the wake of the fiscal crisis, Government appears to be moving away from the traditional way of funding to a service-commissioning paradigm that could see increased use of competitive tendering in funding services. This will, if poorly implemented, diminish the level of collaboration that has long characterised the relationship between public funders and the community and voluntary sector. This in turn will undermine the community and voluntary approach itself and the Societal Value inherent in it unless important measures are taken to accommodate it in alternative models of funding and regulation.

If society is to continue to benefit from the community and voluntary approach, then public policy must create an **enabling ecosystem** that places as much value, if not more, on non-financial value creation as it does on financial value creation.

This chapter outlines the principles that should underpin the development of an enabling ecosystem. It is followed in Chapter 4 with recommendations around the key components of an enabling ecosystem for Societal Value creation to flourish.

An enabling ecosystem will recognise and value the unique aspects of the community and voluntary approach. For example, valuing a focus on 'root causes' and advocacy on behalf of citizens for positive change;

having a long term view that can act as a counter balance to the short-termism inherent in the business and electoral cycles; providing opportunities for active citizenship through voluntarism that contributes to the achievement of organisations' missions; and collaborating with other stakeholders. Valuing and enabling these and the many other attributes of the community and voluntary approach will benefit society as a whole through the maximisation of Societal Value creation.

3.1. Underlying Principles for Sustaining and Growing Societal Value Creation by the Community and Voluntary Sector

The following principles should underpin future engagement between the community and voluntary sector and public funders.

A strengths-based approach

Sustaining and growing the community and voluntary approach means understanding that community and voluntary organisations are holistic providers of Societal Value and accepting the full range of activities and way of working that is involved and not reducing the approach to one of just service provision.

A strengths-based approach would involve funders recognising that many community and voluntary organisations are rooted in and are highly responsive to the needs of local communities, respecting the professional integrity of community and voluntary bodies and trusting that they will use resources in the best way to meet local needs.

Long term view

A public funding model that is focussed exclusively on minimising public spending in the short term, without regard to longer term capacity or benefit, risks compromising quality, equity, accountability, responsiveness and effectiveness in the provision of services in areas or to communities which are not attractive for profit-making organisations seeking to maximise return on capital.

The **grant-funding method** has continuing relevance and has delivered flexibility, innovation, trust and partnership working between public funders and the community and voluntary sector. This collaborative mode is more likely to maximise Societal Value creation than a model concerned only with financial efficiency.

Consequently, when commissioning human, social or community services, commissioners should only use competitive tendering approaches where the tendering approach will demonstrably achieve a higher level of Societal Value creation.

Irrespective of the funding model being used, public funders should **take into account the full range of Societal Value (financial and non-financial)** that different providers demonstrate in the way in which they propose to meet the particular service objectives being sought.

Risk sharing

A growing trend has been increasing aversion by public funders to accept any risk, which is manifested in the detail of service agreements and contracts, where risk is increasingly being shifted from the public funder to the service provider.

A collaborative approach to risk sharing is required if the full societal value inherent in the community and voluntary approach is to be realised.

Collaboration

A key component of the community and voluntary approach is engaging with all relevant stakeholders to develop the best solution to meet the needs

of people and to keep stakeholders informed. The community and voluntary sector seeks a relationship with public funders that acknowledges and respects the Societal Value creation of the community and voluntary approach, not least the sector's unique ability to understand and respond rapidly to the needs of local areas and communities.

This requires an environment that engages with the sector, supports autonomous decision-making informed by local requirements and circumstances and trusts that resources will be used in the best way to meet the needs of local people rather than relying exclusively on unduly restrictive and demanding service level agreements, performance management systems and regulatory requirements.

Government commitments in the Open Government Partnership programme for increased citizen participation at Oireachtas Committee level through systematic pre-legislative scrutiny of draft Bills empowers Committees to consult with citizens, civic society groups and other interested groups. Such commitments are an example of how a positive environment of engagement and collaboration could be developed.

Proportionality

Community and voluntary organisations recognise the need to be accountable to funders (public or private), service users, and the wider community. In this regard, the sector has called for the establishment of a charities regulator for over two decades, and has warmly welcomed the establishment of the regulator. Additionally the sector has initiated measures including the **GoodCharity.ie** website and the **Governance Code for Community and Voluntary Organisations** (www.governancecode.ie) to support good governance in community and voluntary organisations.

The value base of the community and voluntary sector is attuned to the creation of Societal Value and this needs to be recognised in the way that performance and accountability are measured.

The sector is seeking a regulatory environment that is proportionate and enabling. For example, by focussing on the positive outcomes that are being achieved (rather than what is not being done) and by having shared/standardised reporting and monitoring frameworks.

3.2. Conclusion

An uncritical and unconsidered adoption of competitive tendering as the main means of commissioning human, social or community services will result in the loss of the added Societal Value inherent in the Community & Voluntary approach.

Government action is needed to help sustain the Societal Value created by the community and voluntary approach and to create an enabling ecosystem that will support the community and voluntary sector to thrive and flourish.

All of these issues can be addressed through the development of a well-designed ecosystem to fund, regulate and support the work of the community and voluntary sector in the years ahead.

CHAPTER 04

RECOMMENDATIONS

If implemented, the following recommendations would support and sustain Societal Value creation by the sector. The recommendations are under three themes: commissioning within a Societal Value framework; coherent funding models to support the community and voluntary approach; and an enabling ecosystem.

4.1. Recommendations

Commissioning should take place within a Societal Value framework

- 1 A coherent policy rationale for commissioning is an essential starting point, including a shared clear definition of commissioning and commissioning tasks, as recommended in the Centre for Effective Services report *Commissioning in Human, Social and Community Services*. This rationale must be provided for as a matter of urgency as commissioning approaches are increasingly applied. We understand commissioning to be a **strategic planning process linking resource allocation with assessed current and future needs. Commissioning is broader than procurement or competitive tendering.**
- 2 Public commissioners should be required to demonstrate that the outcome of any commissioning exercise maximises **Societal Value** (see model on page 17). Indeed, all public service arrangements should require Societal Value. This means that public services should be funded on the basis of ensuring quality, efficiency, responsiveness, accountability and equity, with appropriate weights given to each. Government departments, statutory agencies and local authorities should review existing approaches to commissioning / funding public services to ensure they are aligned to the maximisation of Societal Value.
- 3 The process of service commissioning should involve **communities in identifying and agreeing their need** and in determining appropriate outcomes. Commissioners should adopt a whole-of-person and/or whole-of-community approach in the process. Commissioners must be clear about what is meant by outcomes; how they will be measured; who will have responsibility for identifying needs; how they will fully engage communities in identifying and agreeing needs and outcomes; and how the achievement of outcomes will be assessed and monitored.
- 4 Government should develop guidelines and training to ensure local government, statutory bodies and government departments that allocate public funds have the **capacity and capability** to effectively commission and to deliver on a Societal Value creation framework. There also needs to be investment in building the skills and capacity of community and voluntary organisations to participate and succeed in all commissioning, procurement, tendering and/or grant funding agreement negotiation exercises.

To sustain Societal Value we need coherent funding models to support the community and voluntary approach

- 5 Funding models should be based on a proportionate and sustainable **sharing of risk** between funder and service provider, with supports made available to help providers to manage risk and to meet regulatory requirements.

- 6 In order to obviate the risk of degrading Societal Value, when commissioning human, social or community services, competitive tendering should only be used where this will demonstrably achieve a higher level of Societal Value creation.
- 7 **Grant-allocation** should remain a core mode of funding available to commissioners. Irrespective of whether funds are applied using grant, grant-in-aid or tendering approaches, **multi-annual funding** allocations should be agreed and funding should provide for full-cost recovery. Grants should be the preferred approach where organisations provide a specialist service or serve a specific community, especially disadvantaged or 'hard to reach' communities
- 8 Service commissioning should have due regard to the **scale** of community and voluntary organisations and not exclude smaller organisations from consideration, especially when local, community and/or specialist services are being sought. Public funders should ensure that community and voluntary organisations are not disadvantaged in situations where they are in direct competition for public funding with profit-making businesses (e.g. on basis of contract size or capacity to accept risk).
- 9 Ireland when **transposing the new European Directive on Public Procurement** should avail of all the options permitting a greater use of social clauses.
- 10 When competitive tendering approaches are used, public commissioners should use **social clauses** in these tenders to the greatest extent permitted under European Directives in order to ensure that Societal Value is maximised when public services are being commissioned in that manner

We need to enable the ecosystem of community and voluntary organisations

- 1% **Regulation should be credible, proportionate, supportive and adequately resourced.** Public funders and regulators should work together to rationalise reporting and regulatory compliance requirements; eliminate multiple –reporting; reduce the administrative load and ensure that volunteers continue to be willing to serve on boards.

- 1& Government should appoint a **Minister for Community and Voluntary Activity** to work with the community and voluntary sector to develop a national strategy, incorporating a coherent long-term funding framework for the sector.

% **Community and voluntary organisations must sustain public appreciation and support for the Societal Value inherent in their work**, having a responsibility to demonstrate best practice in governance; orient their work around achieving outcomes with the communities they serve; and seek to collaborate at all times with relevant partners.

- 1(**Collaborative approaches** to commissioning and engaging with communities and the community and voluntary sector should be supported.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**The concept of Societal Value
creation must be central to the
discussion of how to improve public
services and achieve ever-better
outcomes for people in Ireland.**

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